

Building Blocks for Effective Housing Elements

Special Needs

Farmworkers

Government Code Section 65583(a)(7)) requires “An analysis of any special housing needs, such as those of the elderly, persons with disabilities, large families, farmworkers, families with female heads of households, and families and persons in need of emergency shelter...”

Special needs are those associated with specific demographic or occupational groups which call for very specific program responses, such as preservation of single-room occupancy hotels or the development of units with larger bedroom counts. The statute specifically requires analysis of the special housing needs of the elderly, the disabled, female headed households, large families, farmworkers and homeless persons and families. These special needs groups often spend a disproportionate amount of their income to secure safe and decent housing and are sometimes subject to discrimination based on their specific needs or circumstances.

In addition to the groups listed above, the analysis of special needs should also include any other group the locality deems appropriate.

I. REQUISITE ANALYSIS

A thorough analysis will assist a locality identify groups with the most serious housing needs in order to develop and prioritize responsive programs. The analysis of each special needs group must include the following:

- A quantification of the total number of persons and households in the special housing needs group, including tenure, where possible.
- A quantification and qualitative description of the need, including a description of the potential housing problems faced by the special needs groups, a description of any existing resources, and an assessment of unmet needs.
- Identification of potential program or policy options and resources to address the need.

Farmworkers

Farmworkers and day laborers are an essential component of California's agriculture industry. Farmers and farmworkers are the keystone of the larger food sector which includes the industries that provide farmers with fertilizer and equipment, farms to produce crops and livestock, and the industries which process, transport and distribute food to consumers.

Farmworker households are often compromised of extended family members or single male workers and as a result many farmworker households tend to have difficulties securing safe, decent and affordable housing. Far too often farmworkers are forced to occupy substandard homes or live in overcrowded situations. Additionally, farmworker households:

- tend to have high rates of poverty;
- live disproportionately in housing which is in the poorest condition;
- have very high rates of overcrowding;
- have low homeownership rates; and
- are predominately members of minority groups.

In addition to the requisite analysis above, a thorough analysis of the special housing needs for farmworkers should include the following:

- An estimate of the number of permanent and seasonal farmworkers within the community.
- A description of different housing types (e.g., single-family, multifamily, group quarters) appropriate to accommodate the housing needs of permanent and seasonal farmworkers.
- A description of local development standards and processing requirements, including any special conditions of approval imposed on farmworker housing.
- Demonstration that zoning is consistent with Health and Safety Code Section 17021.6 which precludes a local government from requiring a conditional use permit, zoning variance, and or other zoning clearance for certain agricultural employee housing.
- Identification of zones with appropriate development standards and permit process procedures to encourage and facilitate the development of housing affordable to farmworkers (individuals and families).
- Where there is insufficient capacity to accommodate the identified need for farmworker housing, the element must include a program to provide sufficient sites with zoning that permits farmworker housing by right.

- A description of the local government's role in working cooperatively with local growers, ag-related businesses such as packing and distribution facilities, the farm bureau, and advocates for farmworkers such as the California Rural Legal Assistance (CRLA) for the purposes of determining available resources and shortfalls.

As necessary, the element should include a program that commits the local government to collaborating with agricultural employers in identifying sites and pursuing funding sources available through HCD and the USDA's Rural Development programs (refer to *IV. Links* for specific information).

Sample Table

The following is a sample table to assist in organizing critical information pertaining to permanent and seasonal farmworker populations. The information provided in the table should be tailored to the jurisdiction and followed by appropriate analysis. This sample table is not intended to be a substitute for addressing the analytical requirements of housing element law.

FARMWORKERS

Farm Operations with less than 10 employees	
Permanent	
Seasonal (e.g. less than 150 days)	
Total	
Farm Operations with 10 or More employees	
Permanent	
Seasonal (e.g. less than 150 days)	
Total	
Source: USDA 2002 Census of Farmworkers, USDA & COG	

KEY IDEAS

II. MODEL ANALYSES

[Sample Analysis](#)

III. LINKS

Farmworker Data Sources

[USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service, 2002 Census of Agriculture:](#)
California County Level Data

[Migration Dialogue - Farmworker Employment Data:](#) Links to three farmworker employment data series from the Employment Development Department (EDD): EDD Monthly Data, EDD Annual Data, and EDD Regional Data and one series from the Census of Agriculture.

[U.S. Department of Labor: National Agricultural Workers Survey](#)

[The California Farm Labor Force Overview and Trends from the National Agricultural Workers Survey;](#) Aguirre International, Burlingame, California

[Environmental Health Policy and California's Farm Labor Housing,](#) John Muir Institute on the Environment, University of California, Davis, October 1, 2006

Funding Resources

[HCD: Office of Migrant Services:](#) Grants to local government agencies that contract with HCD to operate OMS centers located throughout the State to provide housing and support services for migrant farmworker families during the peak harvest season.

[HCD: Joe Serna Jr. Farmworker Housing Grant Program:](#) Grants and loans to assist development or rehabilitation of various types of housing projects for agricultural worker households.

[California Tax Credit Allocation Committee \(TCAC\): Farmworker Housing Assistance Program \(FWHAP\):](#) The FWHAP provides for the rehabilitation of existing facilities, or new construction of Farm Worker housing

[USDA, Rural Development Program:](#) Financial programs, technical assistance and information.

Farmworker Resources

[HCD: Selected Bibliography on Farmworker Issues](#)

[Department of Education: Migrant Education Regional Offices](#)

[U.S. Department of Labor, Employment & Training Administration: Service Delivery to Migrant and Seasonal Laborers](#)

[Rural Community Assistance Corporation: Resources for Agricultural Workers](#)

[The Center for Rural Entrepreneurship](#)

[The Measure of California Agriculture](#)

[California Endowment: 2004-2005 Annual Report – Building Healthy Homes for Farmworker Communities \(page 12\)](#)

[Environmental Health Policy and California's Farm Labor Housing](#)

[Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco: Community Investments Online – Increasing the Harvest for Farmworker Housing](#)

[Housing Assistance Council: Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Housing](#)

[California Rural Legal Assistance](#)

[California Housing Law Project](#)

[California Human Development Corporation](#)

[California Institute for Rural Studies](#)

[Farmworker Health and Safety Institute](#)

[National Center for Farmworker Health](#)

[Farmworker Housing Prototype Unit Plan](#)

[Farmworker Justice Fund](#)

Farmworker Housing Case Studies

[Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians Farmworker Study - Coachella Valley](#)

[Farmworker Housing Study, Ventura County](#)

[Rancho Sespe Farmworker Housing, Ventura](#)

[Farm Workers Housing and Needs Assessment Study of the Salinas and Pajaro Valleys, Monterey County](#)